

# Oklahoma Conservation Partnership Report

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Natural Resources Conservation  
Service, 100 USDA, Suite 206  
Stillwater, OK 74074  
405.742.1204

[www.ok.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ok.nrcs.usda.gov)

VISION: Productive Lands – Healthy Environment -- MISSION: Helping People Help the Land

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## Welcome Back, NRCS Employees!

### Continuing Conservation....

**All NRCS offices across the country are open, resuming conservation work with farmers and ranchers, and working to address the backlog of requests.** NRCS is able to proceed with implementation of several conservation programs, including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). However, authority to enroll new acres in several programs, such as the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) and Chesapeake Bay Watershed program, expired on September 30, 2013 due to the expiration of the Farm Bill. Producers should be directed to contact their local USDA Service Center or visit [www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov) for more information.

## Public Television's 'This American Land' to Showcase Agency's Work in Three Episodes



NRCS conservationists help put conservation practices on the ground each day, and that work will make an appearance on the big screen this fall. A public television series – [“This American Land”](#) – will showcase NRCS in three episodes of its third season.

### The three segments that feature NRCS include:

**Critical Aquifer:** Water is precious in the West, and producers work diligently to conserve it. Through watering more carefully and investing in soil health, every drop can be put to good use. Meet a few of the conservation heroes in the Ogallala Aquifer region. Check out part of this [episode](#).

**Prairie Chickens and Bog Turtles:** By using conservation, producers are strengthening their agricultural operations while helping out wildlife in need. Through the Working Lands for Wildlife Initiative, producers play a crucial role in creating and enhancing habitat for at-risk species.

**Precious Sierra Water:** Conservation is a win-win for the environment and the landowner. See how California producers improve their vineyards, ranches and forests all for the sake of a resource more precious than gold.

The first segment, “Critical Aquifer,” was released Oct. 14. The second segment, “Prairie Chickens and Bog Turtles,” will be released Oct 28, 2013. The last segment, “Precious Sierra Water,” will be released Nov. 19. Check your [local listings](#) for scheduled airdates because they differ by public television station.

**An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer**

## ENGINEERING REVIEW

### Cottonwood 15 Repair

The Stillwater Watershed Office recently completed emergency repair construction on Cottonwood Creek Site 15 that was decommissioned. An extreme rainfall event spanning the end of May to the first of June led to a high flow event on the earthen spillway portion that was lined with Turf Reinforcement Mat (TRM). The TRM failed during the storm event, and due to the frequency of potential flow events through the structure, an emergency was declared to repair the structure before the crest section breached, which could have led to the release of all the sediment the flood control structure had captured over the past 45 years. The repair included replacing the TRM lined channel with a riprap lined channel that carries the water to the downstream outlet channel of the main rock chute.



### Irrigation Pumping Plant Workshop



On August 6 & 7, 2013 Chris Stoner (State Conservation Engineer) and Don Sternitzke (Water Management SPC) attended The Irrigation Pumping Plant Performance Testing Workshop in Stuttgart, Arkansas. The meeting hosted by Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service featured a hands-on workshop that taught participants how to conduct irrigation pumping plant performance tests aimed at: 1) identifying inefficient components, and 2) making cost-effective remedial recommendations.

**WATER RESOURCES REVIEW****Status of Oklahoma Watershed Rehabilitation Projects as of 9-18-13**

Watershed	Dam No.	County	Conservation District	Status	
In Planning					
Upper Elk	23D	Beckham	North Fork of Red River CD	12/1/2013	
Planning Completed - Awaiting Design					
Sallisaw Creek	32	Sequoyah	Sequoyah County CD	Pending Landrights	
Rock Creek	15 & 16	Murray	Murray County CD		
In Design					
Quapaw Creek	15M	Lincoln	Lincoln County CD	Pending	
Barntiz Creek	11	Dewey	Dewey County CD	Estimated completion 6-15-14	
Barnitz Creek	5	Dewey	Dewey County CD	Estimated completion 9-30-14	
Fourche Maline	7M	Latimer	Latimer County CD	Estimated completion 5-1-15	
Cottonwood Creek	16	Canadian	East Canadian CD	Estimated completion 8-1-15	
Upper Black Bear	62	Noble	Noble County CD		
Sallisaw Creek	29	Sequoyah	Sequoyah County CD		
Planning & Design Completed - Awaiting Construction					
Cottonwood Creek	54	Logan	Logan County CD	Pending Landrights	
Sallisaw Creek	34	Sequoyah	Sequoyah County CD	Pending Landrights	
Sallisaw Creek	33	Sequoyah	Sequoyah County CD	Pending	
Sallisaw Creek	28	Sequoyah	Sequoyah County CD		
Sallisaw Creek	30	Sequoyah	Sequoyah County CD		
Under Construction					
Ft Cobb Laterals	10	Caddo	South Caddo County CD	Estimated completion 1-15-14	
Barntiz Creek	1	Dewey	Dewey County CD	Estimated completion 8-15-14	
Rehabilitation Completed					
Sandstone Creek	16A	Roger Mills	Upper Washita CD		
Barnitz Creek	14.00	Dewey	Dewey County CD		
Mill Creek	18.00	Johnston	Johnston County CD		
Double Creek	1,2,3,4,5,6	ton	Caney Valley CD		
Cavalry Creek	6.00	Washita	Washita County CD	*American Recovery Reinvestment Act	
Sandstone Creek	12,17A	Roger Mills	Upper Washita CD		
Sergeant Major Creek	1,2	Roger Mills	Upper Washita CD		
Cobb Creek	2.00	Washita	Deer Creek CD		
Sallisaw Creek	15,16,20	Adair	Adair County CD		
Big Wewoka Creek	29.00	Seminole	Seminole County CD		
Cottonwood Creek	17.00	Canadian	East Canadian CD		
Sallisaw Creek	18M	Adair	Adair County CD	*ARRA	
Sugar Creek	L-43	Caddo	West Caddo County CD	*ARRA	
Upper Clear Boggy	35.00	Pontotoc	Pontotoc County CD	*ARRA	
Cobb Creek	1.00	Washita	Deer Creek CD		
Upper Clear Boggy	36.00	Pontotoc	Pontotoc County CD		
Cottonwood Creek	15.00	Kingfisher	Kingfisher County CD	Decommission	*ARRA
Turkey Creek	9.00	Washita	Washita County CD		
Upper Clear Boggy	33.00	Pontotoc	Pontotoc County CD		*ARRA
Sugar Creek	L-44	Caddo	South Caddo County CD		*ARRA
Upper Clear Boggy	34.00	Pontotoc	Pontotoc County CD		*ARRA
Caney-Coon Creek	2M	Coal	Coal County CD		
Sallisaw Creek	26.00	Adair	Adair County CD		



## OUTREACH REVIEW

### **NRCS Partners with the Euchee Butterfly Farm to Provide Training and Information to Tribes on Butterfly Farming**

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) partnered with the Oklahoma Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (OTCAC) and the Euchee Butterfly Farm to provide training and information to Tribes and tribal members on how to start a butterfly farm. The butterflies of the Euchee Butterfly Farm are raised on site by tribal members, using ecologically sustainable methods, and sold to butterfly exhibits throughout North America and Europe. The workshop was sponsored by the OTCAC and hosted by the Citizen Pottawatomie Nation on their Tribal Traditions Grounds, in Shawnee, Oklahoma. The workshop was held on Thursday, August 29, 2013, from 9:30 AM to 10:30 AM.

The focus of the workshop was to provide attendees with the information on the importance of Native Butterflies for Native People and Native Pride and how to start a butterfly farm or to create a Native butterfly garden on their traditional grounds. Jane Breckinridge, director of Euchee Butterfly Farm, provided information on how a native butterfly farming offers employment in rural communities, conservation and reintroduction of indigenous plant species to provide host plant for cultivation of native species butterflies, an opportunity to return to native methods of agriculture and provide a sustainable crop that is completely organic and eco-friendly in every possible way. Those attending the workshop were provided a butterfly kit to take home.



**Jane Breckinridge and staff members provided butterfly kits to attendees at the Native Butterflies for Native People and Native Pride workshop.**

## ZONE 1 REVIEW

### **ALFALFA COUNTY – Cherokee Field Service Center**

The new Alfalfa CO. Conservation District secretary, Kelly Hellar, staffed the joint ACCD/NRCS booth at the recent Alfalfa County Fair.



## ZONE 1 REVIEW cont...

### KAY COUNTY – Newkirk Field Service Center

The Kay County Conservation District held its annual Land Judging and Range Plant Identification Contest on September 4, 2013 at a pasture southwest of Newkirk. Students from Tonkawa, Blackwell, and Newkirk Vo-Ag Departments numbering 76 students in all, competed by judging four soil sites and identifying twenty range plants. With all of the rain this year, plants were abundant for the Range Plant ID. The local contest is set up by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and conservation district staff and manned by Earth Team Volunteers. Land judging involves evaluating the texture of topsoil and subsoil, depth of the soil, slope of the land, erosion potential – both water and wind, and permeability of the soil. These criteria help landowners understand basic soil differences, how soil properties affect crop growth, why soils respond differently to management practices, how to select suitable soil and water conservation practices, and ultimately determine land use and treatment. Range plant identification contests help students not only identify plants but also learn their ecological value for beef cattle forage and wildlife habitat, specifically bobwhite quail.

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Awards were given for Land Judging Teams and high individuals, Range Plant ID high individuals, and Combined Score for Land Judging and Range Plant ID for both senior and junior divisions.

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## ZONE 2 REVIEW

### CRAIG COUNTY – Vinita Field Service Center

On September 24th at 8:00am the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), OSU Extension Service and the Craig County Conservation District (CCCD) hosted a free seminar at the Craig County Fair Grounds in Vinita. OSU extension educator Kevin Long spoke on how to control musk thistle and cedar trees, Josh Payne OSU area animal waste management specialist informed us about using chicken litter verses commercial fertilizers. Jo Callison, District Manager, offered information on available district rental equipment and the up- coming state cost-shared program. Erik Friend, our local district conservationist, provided information on the conservation programs that will help land stewards with their conservation problems. The farm loan specialist, Jared Lamb, Farm Service Agency (FSA) informed us on the programs and loan opportunities available to area landowners. A breakfast that included biscuits and gravy, assorted fruits and coffee was provided by the Craig County Conservation District.

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There were 31 attendees and the gravy was really good!

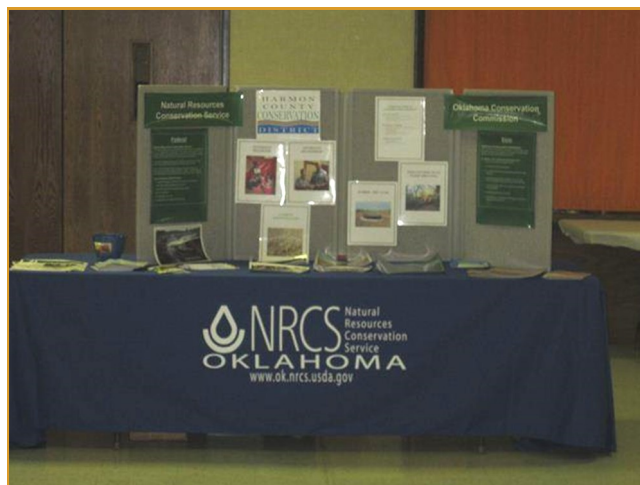
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## ZONE 3 REVIEW

### HARMON COUNTY – Hollis Field Service Center

The Harmon County Conservation District and Hollis NRCS office had an informational booth at the Harmon County Free Fair on September 5 - 7, 2013.



An informational meeting for producers who signed up to participate in the EQIP Greenhouse Gas Initiative. Information was provided on general program requirements, documentation requirements, as well as background information regarding why/how the initiative was developed.

### MCCLAIN COUNTY – Purcell Field Service Center

On September 4, 5, and 6<sup>th</sup> 2013, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and McClain Conservation District partnered to have a conservation information and education booth at the McClain County Conservation fair. The conservation fair was held at the McClain County Expo center in Purcell, Oklahoma. Over 193 students visited the booth during the three day event. Approximately 6,100 farmers, ranchers, local residents and their families visited the conservation fair. Valuable information on current Farm Bill conservation programs was provided. Informational flyers regarding the eligibility of socially disadvantaged, beginning and limited resource farmers and ranchers were made available to attendees visiting the NRCS informational booth. District secretary, Patti Christian and NRCS soil conservation technician, Matt Irby helped staff the conservation booth.



Students, residents and local farmers, from McClain County, visited the NRCS booth during the County fair



## ZONE 4 REVIEW

### ATOKA COUNTY – Atoka Field Service Center

The Natural Resources Conservation Service provided an outreach exhibit with handouts at the annual Atoka County Fair September 5-7. Atoka County Conservation District employees David Milam, District Equipment Manager, and Glenna Bradford, District Programs Coordinator, set up the display (pictured right). 226 Bee & Pollinator and Water posters along with other materials were distributed from the exhibit.



### CARTER COUNTY – Ardmore Field Service Center



The Ardmore NRC Field Service Center and Arbuckle Conservation District conducted a **Land and Plant Identification Contest** in conjunction with the Carter Co. Free Fair.

175 visitors were provided information on programs, wildlife habitat around the home and wildflower seed packets.



50 FFA students participated in the annual contest.

### NRCS Provides Conservation Informational Booth at the Choctaw Nation Labor Day Festival

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) had a conservation informational booth at the Choctaw Nation Labor Day Festival. Each year over 160,000 people attend the festival. The attendees always enjoy receiving the NRCS American Indian Heritage poster that was painted by Choctaw Nation artist, Kathy Sturch. Other items given out were the new pollinator poster, backyard conservation, bookmarks and the bee pollinator booklet.

Those attending and working at the booth were Carol Crouch, State Tribal Liaison American Indian Alaskan Native Special Emphasis Program Manager; Tom Neumeyer, District Conservationist, Stigler FO; Donna Neumeyer, District Conservationist, Poteau FO; Cynthia Ward, District Conservationist, Antlers FO; Derek Kelso, Soil Conservationist, and Johnny Corgill, soil conservation technician, Hugo FO; Thomas James, District Conservationist, and Harold Wheeler, soil conservation technician, Wewoka FO.



During the Choctaw Nation Labor Day Festival, tribal members stood in line to receive a copy of the NRCS 2012 American Indian Heritage poster and conservation information on Farm Bill programs and educational materials.